PATTERNS OF POWER · THE MALIAN CASE

The Umbilical Cord

How a Schoolteacher Descended from Emperors, Formed in Cells the Metropole Itself Had Planted, Built an African Socialist State on the Ruins of a Trade Empire the French Had Already Hollowed; How the One Cord He Cut to Be Free — the Currency — Was the One That Fed Him; and What the Eight Years Between the Flag and the Coup Reveal About the Trap a Departing Empire Leaves Behind Disguised as a Gift — 1235–1977

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with Claude (Anthropic)

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PREFACE

This volume leaves the sugar islands and the partitioned peninsula for the interior of a continent, and the change of terrain is the point. The cases before it were cages with hard edges — the ocean around Cuba, the parallel across Korea, the metabolic walls the Martinican study named — and in each the trap was legible because the boundary was. The Sahelian case asks whether the framework's deepest proposition holds where the boundary is invisible: where a country is bound to its former ruler not by a sea or a wall or a garrison but by a *currency* — a convertibility guarantee, an operations account, a printed note — an umbilical cord so abstract that the man who cut it to be free did not understand, until the trap closed, that it had been feeding him.

The hypotheses on trial are stated in Part I so they can be tested rather than assumed: that Modibo Keïta was a sincere African socialist who built, in a landlocked former French colony, the most rigorous planned economy in Francophone Africa; that the permanent emergency of the revealed-doctrine pattern was, in his case, neither invented like the Albanian's nor delivered whole like the Cuban's but self-inflicted in slow motion, the consequences of his own choices re-narrated into the work of enemies; that the metabolic trap ran here through an instrument the collection had not yet examined — money itself, the metropole's monetary umbilicus, retained by every other Francophone state and severed by his; and that the metropolitan power, its position threatened, reacted not with troops or plots but with the most quietly devastating weapon a former empire holds over a poor client — the terms of convertibility, the weapon of patience, and the price of return.

The Malian case gives the collection something none of its predecessors could: a metropole that reacts through finance, visibly, on the documentary record, its central-bank mechanisms intact and its motives deniable; and a control group next door — Senghor's Senegal, which kept every cord Keïta cut. The method is unchanged: landscape first, values fixed from the record before power, bends read as confession, both columns of the ledger in ink, the strongest counter-readings held at full strength, and the defeat conditions published at the end. The reader new to the collection may begin here; the cross-references carry to the Martinican, Cuban, and Paris-apparatus studies. And the cord this volume anatomises is not history: it still feeds and leashes a sixth of the continent's states as the volume is written.

A NOTE ON THIS COLLABORATION

This volume, like the rest of the collection, is a collaboration between a human author and an artificial intelligence. The framework — the landscape-first method, position logic, the metabolic trap here read through a currency, and the metropole's reaction read through finance rather than force — is Thomas J. Bryan's; the articulation, the historical assembly, and the drafting are Claude's (Anthropic), working under the author's direction and to the project's standing rules: dated evidence before imputation, ranges rather than false precision for disputed figures, paraphrase over quotation, structure rather than character, and the publication, in the final part, of the conditions under which the volume's own verdict would fail. The suffering on every side is held with gravity; the analysis is of positions, not souls.

THE ARGUMENT IN TEN PARTS

The volume's argument, in ten parts, runs as follows.

Part I — The Empire Beneath the Colony. The land that became Mali had been, seven centuries before, one of the richest empires on earth — gold, salt, and the long caravan; the French conquest overlaid that memory with an extractive colony and a name that erased it; a people who knew they had once been a centre and were now a hinterland.

Part II — The Cells the Metropole Planted. The French Communist Party built study-group cells inside the African colonies themselves, so the formation reached the cadre rather than the cadre travelling to it; a generation of schoolteachers became the colony's political class through the union and the cell; and the movement the metropole first repressed and then absorbed.

Part III — The Flag and the Federation. The 1958 referendum offered autonomy-or-rupture, and Keïta, unlike Guinea, chose to stay and bargain; his pan-African ambition built and lost the Mali Federation with Senghor in a marriage of two months; and the unitary state that emerged, alone and landlocked, taking the empire's name.

Part IV — The State He Built. The most rigorous socialist construction in Francophone Africa — the single party, the trade monopoly, the state farms, the plan, the Africanised administration; the genuine achievements and the structural strains; and the craft-of-rule deficit that planning could not close in a country without the trained hands a plan requires.

Part V — The Cord He Cut. How the franc zone worked — the operations account, the convertibility guarantee, the printed note — as a metabolic umbilicus disguised as a technicality; how Keïta left it in 1962 to gain the printing press his construction needed; and how the act that felt like the completion of independence severed the tie that fed the patient.

Part VI — The Reaction That Looked Like Patience. How the metropole, its position threatened, reacted not with troops or plots but with the terms of return; how France let the Malian franc fail of its own logic, then priced readmission to the cord; and the 1967 accord that bought monetary survival with a fifty-per-cent devaluation and a creditor's supervision, splitting the party and arming the radicals.

Part VII — The Emergency in Slow Motion. How Keïta, his pragmatism rejected, answered the crisis his own choices had made by manufacturing an emergency from above — the active revolution of 1967, the suspended constitution, the popular militia, the purges; the self-inflicted wound re-narrated as enemy action; and the militia he armed turning the army into the instrument of his fall.

Part VIII — The Neighbours and the Pattern. Guinea, which cut every cord at once and was punished by withdrawal; Senghor's Senegal, which kept every cord and bought stability with dependence; Nkrumah's Ghana, the Anglophone parallel overthrown the same way two years earlier; and the franc zone that outlived them all, still feeding fourteen states in 2026.

Part IX — The Formation and the Faith. Whether the belief was formation or instrument; how Keïta's Marxism functioned as a developmental tool rather than a revealed religion; the imperial memory as the deeper formation beneath the doctrine; and the regime that, alone in the collection so far, counted few corpses because its doctrine was held too lightly to kill for.

Part X — The Ledger and the Verdict. The sovereignty asserted, the name reclaimed, the cadres trained, the corpses not counted, against the economy wrecked, the currency ruined, the plurality foreclosed, the founder dead in a cell, and the cord reattached on the metropole's terms; the verdict, four counter-readings at full strength, the defeat conditions published; tested, not revealed.

PART I

THE EMPIRE BENEATH THE COLONY

How the land that became Mali had been, seven centuries before, the seat of one of the richest empires on earth — a Sahelian trade state of gold, salt, and the long caravan, with a court, a chronicle, and a memory; how the French conquest of the nineteenth century overlaid that memory with a colony built for extraction and a name that erased it; and the landscape of a people who knew they had once been an empire and were now a hinterland — 1235–1945

I. What This Volume Asks, and Why It Leaves the Islands

This volume leaves the sugar islands and the partitioned peninsula for the interior of a continent, and the change of terrain is the point. The cases before it were cages with hard edges — the ocean around Cuba, the parallel across Korea, the metabolic walls the Martinican study named — and in each the trap was legible because the boundary was. The Sahelian case asks whether the framework's deepest proposition holds where the boundary is invisible: where a country is bound to its former ruler not by a sea or a wall or a garrison but by a *currency* — a convertibility guarantee, an operations account, a printed note — an umbilical cord so abstract that the man who cut it to be free did not understand, until the trap closed, that it had been feeding him. The hypothesis on the table, stated so it can be tested: that Modibo Keïta was a sincere African socialist who built, in a landlocked former French colony, the most rigorous planned economy in Francophone Africa; that the permanent emergency of the revealed-doctrine pattern was, in his case, neither invented like the Albanian's nor delivered whole like the Cuban's but *self-inflicted in slow motion*, as the consequences of his own choices were re-narrated into the work of enemies; that the metabolic trap ran here through an instrument the collection has not yet examined — money itself, the metropole's monetary umbilicus, retained by every other Francophone state and severed by his; and that the metropolitan power, its position threatened, reacted not with troops or plots but with the most quietly devastating weapon a former empire holds over a poor client — the terms of convertibility. The method is the collection's: landscape first, values fixed from the record before power, bends read as confession, both ledger columns in ink, and the strongest counter-readings held to the end.

The Malian case offers the collection something none of its predecessors could: a metropole that reacts through *finance*, visibly, on the documentary record, with its central-bank mechanisms intact and its motives deniable. Where the Cuban volume's hegemon reached for the embargo and the exile brigade, and the Korean volume's for the bomber, the French Republic — having granted the flag — kept its hand on the one lever that mattered and waited; and the volume's task is to read that lever, because it is the purest instrument of post-imperial control the collection has yet encountered, and it is still operating, under the same name, in fourteen African states as this volume is written.

II. The Memory of Gold

The landscape's deepest stratum is a memory, and it is unusual in this collection for being a memory of greatness rather than of wound. The land the French would call the Soudan and the Malians would rename Mali had been, in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, the seat of the Mali Empire — the Sahelian trade state founded, by tradition, when Sundiata Keïta broke the Sosso king at Kirina around 1235 and bound the chiefdoms of the upper Niger into a single hegemony astride the gold routes. The empire's currency was the framework's first inquiry made literal: a floor of force — the cavalry that held the caravan roads — beneath a managed belief, the Islamic kingship that legitimated the *mansa* and the griot's recited genealogy that made his line eternal; and its wealth was a continental fact, the gold of Bambuk and Bure crossing the Sahara to mint the coinage of Christendom and the Maghreb alike. Its fourteenth-century ruler Mansa Musa entered the world's memory by spending, on his pilgrimage to Mecca in 1324, gold enough to depress its price in Cairo for years — the one African sovereign medieval Europe drew on its maps, throned and holding a nugget. The volume fixes the stratum because it is the value the later story runs on: the people of this land carried, in the griot's word and the dynasty's name, the knowledge that they had once been not a periphery but a centre — an empire that taxed the trade of half a continent — and the man this volume studies bore the imperial surname, Keïta, and claimed by tradition the founder's own blood. The volume marks the structural property of such a formation, because the collection has met its like before and the comparison sharpens the case. The Cuban study found that José Martí, dead before he could govern, became an infinitely usable scripture — a sovereignty asserted and never compromised by the friction of rule, available to every successor who needed the dead man's authority. The Malian imperial memory is the same instrument run across seven centuries rather than sixty years: Sundiata and Mansa Musa, like Martí, never had to administer a failing currency or ration a scarce harvest; they exist in the formation as pure sovereignty, the remembered proof that this land *can* be a centre — which makes them a standard the present can only fall short of. A people formed by the memory of an empire does not merely resent the colony; it carries a built-in measure against which every postcolonial government will be weighed and found smaller, and a surname like Keïta is not a neutral fact but a claim and a debt at once — the bearer expected to restore what the name records, and condemned by the same memory when the restoration fails. The imperial memory was the engine and the trap together: it drove the ambition to make Mali a centre again, and it guaranteed that the schoolteacher governing a hinterland would be measured against emperors. A formation of imperial memory in a colonised hinterland is a particular kind of charge: it does not merely resent the colony; it remembers an alternative to it, and measures the present against a sovereignty the ancestors are known to have held.

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III. The Colony That Erased the Empire

What the French built over that memory, across the conquest decades of the late nineteenth century, was its structural negation. The conquest itself was protracted and violent — the cavalry resistance of Samori Touré's state broken only in 1898 after a long pursuit — and the volume pauses on that resistance because it is the imperial memory's last armed chapter and the colony's founding violence in one figure. Samori Touré built, across the 1870s and 1880s, a genuine Mandé empire of the upper Niger — a state with a standing army, locally forged repeating rifles, and an Islamic administration — explicitly in the old imperial mould,

and fought the French for nearly two decades, conducting at the end a scorched-earth migration eastward that laid waste the very lands he was defending rather than yield them; captured in 1898 and exiled to Gabon, where he died, he entered the national memory as the modern *mansa*, the last sovereign who had made the land a centre that fought back, and the volume's subject would be compared to him and would invoke him. The conquest that broke Samori then installed its extraction in the form that bit deepest: the *tirailleurs sénégalais* and the forced-labour and conscription regimes, by which the Soudan's assigned function — a reservoir of bodies — was made flesh. Hundreds of thousands of West Africans were conscripted for the French armies of both world wars, dying in European trenches and on European beaches for the empire that had conquered them; the *indigénat* code subjected the colonised to summary administrative punishment outside the law that governed Frenchmen; and forced labour, the *corvée*, drove the construction of the railways and the harvest of the cash crops well into the twentieth century. The volume marks the human ledger because it is the wound beneath the economic one: the colony did not merely funnel the Soudan's trade through Dakar, it spent the Soudan's people as a raw material, and the formation of every cadre in this volume was seared by the knowledge that the empire of memory had become an empire's quarry. — and what followed was the extractive colony in its Sahelian form, the least profitable kind the empire held. French Soudan had no coast, no plantation crop of sugar's value, no mineral the metropole prized; its assigned function within the imperial division of labour was to be a labour reservoir and a captive market — a supplier of conscripts for the colonial army and the *tirailleurs sénégalais*, of migrant labour for the coastal cash-crop colonies, and of groundnuts and cotton at administered prices — bound by a single railway to the Senegalese coast and the port of Dakar, through which everything it sold and everything it bought was obliged to pass. The volume marks the geography as the metabolic foundation of everything that follows: a vast landlocked territory, its trade funnelled through a foreign-controlled coast, its terms of exchange set elsewhere, its old trans-Saharan commerce — the gold-and-salt circuit that had made the empire — long since rendered obsolete by the Atlantic shipping that the conquest's own ports had built. The empire of the caravan had been an entrepôt at the centre of its own trade routes; the colony was a cul-de-sac at the end of someone else's. And the erasure was nominal as well as economic: the territory was named for a river and a direction — the Soudan, the land of the Blacks — its imperial past demoted to ethnography, so that the act of independence, when it came, would begin with the reclamation of the name, the new republic christening itself *Mali* after the empire the colony had been built to forget. The volume holds the landscape complete: a people formed by the memory of an empire, governing a colony engineered as a hinterland, whose first sovereign act would be to call themselves by the old imperial name — and whose tragedy would be that the name was the easiest thing to reclaim.

PART II

THE CELLS THE METROPOLE PLANTED

How the French Communist Party, unique among Europe's parties in treating colonial work as constitutive, built study-group cells inside the African colonies themselves — so that the formation reached the cadre rather than the cadre travelling to it; how a generation of schoolteachers became the colony's political class through the union and the cell; and the African Democratic Rally that the metropole first repressed and then, having failed, absorbed — 1943–1956

I. The Formation That Travelled to Him

The collection's Paris studies traced cadres who went to the metropole and were formed in its apparatus — the Cambodians in the Cercle Marxiste, the Vietnamese founder at Tours, the Martinican who walked out. The Malian case inverts the geometry, and the inversion is a finding. Modibo Keïta did not go to Paris to be formed; the formation came to him, planted in his own colony by the same apparatus the earlier volumes anatomised. From 1943 the French Communist Party — alone among Europe's parties in treating the colonial question as constitutive of its identity rather than peripheral to it — established *Groupes d'études communistes*, Communist study groups, in the towns of French West Africa: cells, on the standard PCF model the Paris studies described, for the ideological formation of African cadres in Marxism-Leninism, reading the same texts, practising the same study-and-criticism discipline, transmitting the same dual-register analysis — but situated in Bamako and Dakar rather than the Latin Quarter. The volume marks the structural consequence: where the islander cadres absorbed the formation as exiles and carried it home across an ocean, the Soudanese cadres absorbed it *at home*, embedded from the first in the substrate they would later govern — which made their Marxism less a foreign import worn over a native self than a vocabulary fused, from the start, with a specific African political base. Keïta entered the Bamako GEC cell in this period, and the volume notes what the formation found already present in him: not a blank to be written on but the schoolteacher-organiser the next section describes, into whom the cell's class analysis was poured as one more chamber of an already-forming political self.

II. The Schoolteachers' Republic

The man and his class must be fixed together, because in French Soudan they were the same thing. Modibo Keïta was born in 1915 in Bamako-Coura, into a family that claimed descent from the imperial Keïta line; he passed through the territorial schools to the École normale William Ponty in Dakar — the single teacher-training college that formed the entire French West African évolué elite, the graduates who would lead a dozen independent states a generation later — and graduated, the record agrees, at the top of his class. He returned to teach, in Bamako and Sikasso and Timbuktu, and entered politics through the door his profession opened: the teachers' union, the Union of French West African Teachers, which he helped found — labour organisation as the schoolteacher's path into national leadership, the union the cell's natural partner and the

schoolroom the cadre's natural pulpit. The volume fixes the formation's values from this pre-power record with the method's discipline. What Keïta valued, on the evidence before 1960: *the nation reclaimed* — the imperial memory of Part I fused with anti-colonial nationalism into a project of restored African sovereignty, sharpened by his support for the Algerian FLN and his contempt, documented in his own phrase, for the assimilationist who was more French than the French; *discipline and uplift* — the schoolteacher's faith that a people could be educated and organised into modernity, the cell's Leninism congenial to a man already certain that an enlightened cadre should lead the unformed mass; and *his own dignity and command* — the top-of-the-class évolué, descended from emperors, briefly jailed by the French in 1946 and hardened rather than broken by it, a man who carried himself, every witness agreed, with the bearing of the line he claimed. What the record does not show is the doctrinaire: Keïta's Marxism was real but instrumental and eclectic, a tool of national development rather than a revelation, and the volume flags now the fact Part V will weigh — that in power he tilted not toward Moscow but toward Washington, courted American aid, and called Kennedy a friend, which is not the conduct of a man owned by the doctrine the cell had taught him.

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III. Repression, Then Absorption

The political vehicle was the Rassemblement Démocratique Africain, the African Democratic Rally, founded across French West Africa in 1946 as an interterritorial anti-colonial movement, and its early history is a clean specimen of the framework's foreclosure-and-release dynamic operating through a metropole subtle enough to switch tactics. The RDA's Soudanese branch, the Union Soudanaise that Keïta led, was at its founding affiliated in the French National Assembly with the Communist group, and the colonial administration treated it accordingly: in 1947–48 the metropole moved against the RDA with the full repressive apparatus — administrative harassment, the jailing of militants, the killing of demonstrators in several territories, the machinery a colonial state turns on a movement it has classified as subversion. And then, having failed to crush it, the metropole did the more sophisticated thing, and the volume marks the manoeuvre because it is the Paris Apparatus's logic in reverse: in 1950 the RDA's continental leader, Houphouët-Boigny of the Ivory Coast, broke the movement's affiliation with the Communists and aligned it instead with a governing French party — disaffiliation as the price of legality, the metropole absorbing the movement it could not suppress by making its moderation the condition of its survival. The split ran through the RDA for a decade, and it ran through Keïta, who kept the Union Soudanaise on the movement's left while operating, with evident skill, inside the legal institutions the absorption opened: territorial assembly, then a seat as deputy in the French National Assembly from 1956, where he rose to become its first African vice-president, and a junior ministerial post in a French government. The volume holds the irony the next part will need: the man who would build an African socialist state and cut the cord to France spent the late 1950s inside the French parliament, presiding over its sessions, a minister of the Republic — formed by the metropole's cells, legalised by the metropole's absorption, and elevated by the metropole's institutions, before he turned to dismantle the metropole's hold.

PART III

THE FLAG AND THE FEDERATION

How the loi-cadre and de Gaulle's 1958 referendum offered the colonies autonomy-or-rupture, and how Keïta, unlike Guinea, chose to stay inside the Community and bargain; how his pan-African ambition built and then lost the Mali Federation with Senghor's Senegal in a marriage of two months; and the unitary state that emerged, alone and landlocked, taking the empire's name — 1956–1960

I. The Choice of 1958

The decolonising sequence handed the cadres a precise menu, and the volume reads Keïta's selections as position logic because they reveal the values under pressure. The 1956 *loi-cadre* devolved real autonomy to the territories but did so by *territorialising* power — strengthening each colony's own assembly and thereby, the federalists charged, balkanising French West Africa into a dozen weak units rather than a single strong federation; Keïta, the pan-Africanist, opposed it for exactly this fragmenting effect, and the volume notes the consistency, because the man who feared the balkanisation of 1956 would spend his presidency landlocked and alone, the fragmentation's prediction fulfilled. The volume dwells on the *loi-cadre* quarrel because it is the cleanest case in the African material of position logic operating on a structural insight that was correct and unheeded. Keïta and the federalists saw what the framework sees: that French West Africa had been governed as two large federations with shared services — a common currency, common infrastructure, a common administrative spine — and that devolving power to each territory separately would shatter the shared structure into a dozen units individually too small and too poor to stand, each then dependent on the metropole precisely because it was too weak to be anything else. The metropole, for its part, understood the same logic from the other side, and the volume reads the *territorialisation* as deliberate: a single strong West African federation would have been a peer to bargain with and a rival to fear, while a dozen weak successor states would each, separately, need France more than France needed any one of them. Houphouët-Boigny of the Ivory Coast — the richest territory, which subsidised the poorer through the federal budget and resented it — sided with the metropole's territorial logic for his own reasons, preferring to keep the Ivory Coast's wealth rather than share it across a federation; and so the African leadership itself was split, on the eve of independence, between the federalists who saw the balkanisation coming and the territorialists whose immediate interests it served. Keïta lost that argument, and the volume marks the loss as the precondition of everything after: the balkanisation he failed to prevent produced the landlocked, isolated, four-million-person rump he would govern, and a leader who had correctly diagnosed the trap was nonetheless delivered into it by the choices of others — the structure foreclosing the federal road before his presidency began. Then came de Gaulle's referendum of September 1958: the colonies were offered membership in a French Community with internal autonomy, or immediate independence with the rupture of all French support — and here the Malian and Guinean roads forked in a way the collection must mark, because the fork is the whole question of the cord. Guinea's Sékou Touré voted *Non*, took immediate independence, and suffered the metropole's punitive withdrawal — the administrators pulled out, the equipment stripped, the files burned, the new state

cut off at the root as a lesson to the others. Keïta voted *Oui*: he kept Soudan inside the Community, took autonomy rather than rupture, and chose to bargain his way to independence over two years rather than seize it in a night. The volume reads the choice as the tell it is: Keïta was a revolutionary in doctrine and a negotiator in method, a man who had spent a decade working the metropole's institutions from within and who calculated — correctly, for the moment — that the gradual road kept the cords attached while the flag was raised. The tragedy the volume will trace is that he kept the cords in 1958 in order to cut the one that mattered in 1962, not understanding that they were not all the same cord.

II. The Two-Month Marriage

The pan-African ambition then built its monument and lost it in a season. Keïta's deepest political commitment, the volume has established, was to African unity against the balkanisation he feared; and in 1959 he pursued it by federating Soudan with Senghor's Senegal into the Mali Federation — two territories, one state, reaching for the larger West African union that both men's rhetoric demanded and that neither Houphouët-Boigny's Ivory Coast nor the others would join. The Federation took the imperial name — Mali — and Keïta became the prime minister of its government; it achieved independence from France in June 1960; and it broke apart in August 1960, two months later, in mutual recrimination. The volume reads the collapse structurally rather than as personal failure, because the structure is the lesson: the two leaders were incompatible in exactly the dimension the collection measures — Senghor the cultural synthesist, gradualist, content with a loose confederation and close French ties, the man Keïta had dismissed as more French than the French; Keïta the centraliser, the socialist, the man who wanted a unitary state with a single party and a planned economy, and who moved to control the Federation's army and apparatus in ways Dakar read as a coup in preparation. Senegal seceded; the Federation died; and Keïta, the volume notes for the irony, was left holding the name of unity over a state of solitude — *Mali*, the empire of half a continent, now a single landlocked republic, its pan-African project stillborn in its first summer, its founder's defining ambition refuted before his presidency had properly begun.

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III. Alone, Landlocked, and Named for an Empire

What remained, in September 1960, the volume fixes as the position from which every later choice was made, because the position was unforgiving. Keïta proclaimed the independent Republic of Mali — the Soudanese rump of the dead Federation — with himself as president and the Union Soudanaise as the state. The inheritance was the Part I landscape stripped of every comfort: a vast, poor, landlocked territory of some four million people; one of the lowest literacy rates and incomes on earth; an economy still funnelled through Dakar, now the capital of a foreign country with which Mali had just quarrelled bitterly; no coast, no mineral wealth then exploited, no cash crop of value beyond groundnuts and cotton sold at the world's mercy; and a colonial administration that, on departure, left the thinnest of trained cadres behind. Against this the new state set the maximalist programme its formation demanded: rapid socialist construction, a single party, a planned economy, Africanisation of the administration, non-alignment, and pan-African leadership — the schoolteacher's faith in organisation and the cell's faith in planning, applied to one of the least equipped states the continent produced. The volume marks the gap between programme and substrate as the craft-of-rule question the next part will answer, and notes the one asset the new state genuinely held, which was also

its deepest liability: the name. Mali meant empire, sovereignty, a remembered greatness — and a population formed by that memory would measure the schoolteacher-president against the *mansas*, expecting the restoration of a centre, while the structure he actually governed was a hinterland the French had spent sixty years engineering into dependence. The volume marks the formation-versus-trick question here, because the imperial memory is the clearest case in the African material of belief as installed formation rather than manufactured deception. No one tricked the Malians into believing they had once been an empire; they had been, and the griot's recited genealogy — the *jeli* who carried the Keïta line and the deeds of Sundiata in memorised verse across forty generations — was not propaganda but a transmission older than the colony and independent of any state, installed in the child before any government reached him, the way the Korean volume found the Confucian grammar of rule installed before any doctrine arrived. The memory was true, the transmission was authentic, and the formation it produced was real: a Malian did not need to be persuaded that sovereignty was his people's birthright, because the griot had told him so since before he could weigh it, and the surname Keïta carried the claim in the body. This is what the French tradition's image of belief-as-priestcraft cannot accommodate and what the collection has found case after case: the deepest beliefs that organise a people's politics are not tricks worked by cynical rulers on a credulous mass but formations installed by transmission over generations, true or false or both, beneath the level at which they could be chosen. Keïta did not manufacture the imperial memory to legitimate his rule; he was *produced* by it, one more bearer of a formation seven centuries deep, and his socialism was the modern instrument a premodern formation reached for — which is why the volume reads his deepest motive as the imperial ambition and his Marxism as its tool, and why the case belongs, despite its monetary singularity, to the same finding as all the others: the managed belief over the floor of force is formation, and formation is installed before it can be weighed, in Bamako by the griot as in Pyongyang by the catechism and in Havana by the saint. The flag was up; the cords still ran to Paris and Dakar; and the founder, certain that real independence required cutting them, prepared to do so.

PART IV

THE STATE HE BUILT

How the schoolteacher built, in eight years, the most rigorous socialist construction in Francophone Africa — the single party fused to the state, the trade monopoly, the state farms and cooperatives, the development plan, the Africanised administration; the genuine achievements and the structural strains; and the craft-of-rule deficit that planning could not close in a country without the trained hands a plan requires — 1960–1965

I. The Architecture of Construction

The volume credits the construction's scope before counting its costs, because the scope was real and the intent serious. Keïta's Mali built, between 1960 and the mid-1960s, the most thoroughgoing socialist apparatus in formerly French Africa, and the volume itemises it as the deliberate programme it was. The single party: the Union Soudanaise–RDA was declared the sole legal party and fused with the state, its political bureau the country's real cabinet, its discipline the state's discipline — the Leninist form the cell had taught, installed as the constitution of the republic. The trade monopoly: SOMIEX, the state import-export company created in 1960, took monopoly control of the foreign trade and the distribution of essential goods — the commanding height the doctrine prized, and, in a country whose every external transaction had run through French commercial houses, a genuine seizure of the colonial trade structure. The planned economy: a five-year development plan from 1961, capital-intensive and ambitious, aimed at state-led industrialisation — factories for textiles, cigarettes, matches, canning — and at the diversification away from the groundnut-and-cotton dependency the colony had imposed. The rural sector: state farms, mechanisation schemes, and a drive to organise the peasantry into cooperatives — the collectivising impulse the doctrine carried everywhere, applied to a Sahelian smallholder agriculture that had never been organised from above. And the administration: the rapid Africanisation of the civil service, French functionaries replaced by Malians, the schoolteacher's faith in trained cadres made state policy. The Africanisation deserves its own weighing, because it was simultaneously the regime's proudest achievement and the sharpest exposure of the craft deficit, and the two faces are the same fact. To replace the French functionaries who had run the colonial state was a genuine act of decolonisation and a genuine restoration of dignity — Malians governing Mali, the administration speaking in Malian voices, the humiliation of foreign command ended; the volume credits it without reservation as a real good. But the act revealed, in the revealing, what the colony had withheld: there were not enough trained Malians to run a modern state, because the colony had been engineered for sixty years never to produce them — a labour reservoir does not train administrators, and the William Ponty college that formed the évolué elite had graduated, across all of French West Africa and all its decades, a stratum to be counted in the low thousands, of which Mali's share was a few hundred. So Africanisation, the right and necessary act, installed in the state's load-bearing positions men whose competence was their loyalty and their schooling rather than their experience, because the experienced did not exist to install; and the planned economy, the most administratively demanding of all systems, was handed to the thinnest

administrative class any of the collection's states possessed. The volume marks the cruelty of the position with the method's precision: the colony had created the conditions under which decolonisation could not succeed — it had so thoroughly prevented the formation of a Malian administrative class that the act of replacing the colonisers with Malians was guaranteed to degrade the state's capacity, so that the metropole's departure was itself a sabotage laid in advance, the craft deficit not a Malian failing but a colonial bequest, detonating on schedule the moment sovereignty tried to use what the colony had refused to build. The volume marks the construction's sincerity: this was not a kleptocracy with a red flag but a serious, doctrinally coherent attempt to build a developmental socialist state on the poorest of foundations — which is what makes its failure a finding about the framework rather than about the man.

II. The Deficit That Planning Could Not Close

The craft-of-rule trap, the collection's standing finding, closed on Mali with particular cruelty, because Mali had less craft to deficit than almost any state the collection has examined. The volume states the structural problem the doctrine could not see: a planned economy is the most administratively demanding system a state can attempt — it requires the planners, accountants, engineers, statisticians, and managers to replace the price signals it abolishes — and Mali, on independence, had perhaps the thinnest trained stratum of any new state, a few hundred William Ponty graduates and a literacy rate in the low single digits, asked to run an apparatus that the world's most developed economies struggle to operate. The result was the trap in textbook form. The state enterprises, SOMIEX foremost, became sumps of inefficiency, overstaffing, and loss — the trade monopoly that was meant to capture the colonial middleman's profit instead generating shortages of the goods it monopolised, the queues and the empty shelves the Cuban volume's reader will recognise. The state farms underperformed the smallholders they replaced; the cooperatives were resisted by a peasantry that experienced forced organisation as a new extraction; the industrial plan built factories the country could not supply with inputs or run at capacity — the Cuban volume's crash-industrialisation failure, reproduced on a smaller and poorer stage. The volume reads the deficit precisely, without contempt: the men running Mali were able and serious, but planning is a craft, the craft requires a class the colony had been engineered never to produce, and the doctrine that prescribed the plan supplied no substitute for the absent hands — the New Man of incentive could not audit a ledger, and exhortation does not staff a treasury.

The trade monopoly repays a closer look, because SOMIEX is the craft deficit's most legible specimen and the bridge to the monetary catastrophe of Part V. The colonial trade structure Keïta inherited was genuinely extractive: a handful of French commercial houses — the great trading companies of French West Africa — controlled the import of manufactures and the export of groundnuts and cotton, buying the peasant's crop low and selling him his necessities high, the classic colonial scissors. Seizing that structure for the state was doctrinally obligatory and not unreasonable in principle; the question was whether the state could run what it seized, and the answer the framework predicts arrived on schedule. SOMIEX, granted monopoly over the country's essential imports and its export marketing, had to do at a stroke what the French houses had built over decades and what a market does continuously without anyone intending it: judge demand, source supply, price goods, manage inventory, move stock across a country with almost no roads — and it had to do so with the few hundred trained administrators a colony engineered as a labour reservoir had produced. The result was the trade monopoly as a generator of the scarcity it was meant to cure: goods that the French houses had somehow kept on the shelves vanished from SOMIEX's; the queue and the empty store became the citizen's daily experience of socialism; the peasant, paid in a currency that bought nothing because the goods were absent, withheld his crop or smuggled it across the border to the convertible-franc

neighbours; and the parallel market the monopoly was built to abolish grew in its shadow, the only place the goods actually were. The volume reads SOMIEX as the craft deficit made visible to every Malian every day — not a moral failure but a structural one, the commanding height seized by a state that lacked the hands to operate it — and notes that the scarcity it generated was already corroding the regime's standing before the currency decision converted a chronic ailment into an acute one. The monopoly's losses, moreover, were a principal source of the fiscal hole; the state enterprise meant to capture the colonial middleman's profit instead bled the treasury, and the bleeding treasury was the proximate driver of the demand for a printing press of one's own. The deficit was structural, colonial in origin, and fatal in effect, and it was already biting before the decision of the next part made everything worse.

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III. The Fiscal Hole

The construction's strains converged on a fiscal hole the volume must size, because the hole is what drove the catastrophic decision of Part V. The development plan was capital-intensive and the country was capital-poor; the state enterprises lost money; the administration, swollen by Africanisation and patronage, cost more than the revenue base could bear; the trade deficit widened as the plan imported machinery and the monopoly mismanaged exports. Soviet and Chinese aid arrived — Mali leaned visibly toward the socialist bloc, took Eastern credits and technicians, won Keïta the Lenin Peace Prize in 1963 — but the aid was technical and tied, never the open subsidy the Cuban volume's patron eventually supplied, and it did not close the gap; and the American aid Keïta courted, calling Kennedy a friend in a calculated non-alignment, was likewise real but limited. The structural fact the volume drives toward is this: by the early 1960s Mali was spending far beyond its means on a socialist construction its economy could not yet support, running deficits that someone had to finance, and it was still — crucially, the cord still attached — inside the franc zone, using the CFA franc, whose convertibility the French Treasury guaranteed and whose discipline the French Treasury enforced. To spend as the plan required, Keïta needed a printing press he controlled. The franc zone denied him one: that was its discipline and, the next part will argue, its quiet leash. And so the founder reasoned his way to the decision that defines the volume — that real independence and the fiscal freedom his construction needed both required the same act: his own money. He would cut the cord. He did not know it was the feeding one.

The volume pauses on the structure of the decision, because it is the case's intellectual centre and the framework's sharpest specimen of a rational man defeated by a double instrument. Keïta's reasoning was not foolish; it was, on its own premises, impeccable. Premise one: real sovereignty is incompatible with a currency printed, guaranteed, and disciplined by the former coloniser — a state that does not control its own money is not fully a state, and the franc zone was, correctly diagnosed, an instrument of continuing metropolitan control. Premise two: a programme of rapid socialist construction requires the capacity to finance investment beyond current revenue — a developmental state must be able to direct credit, and the franc zone's discipline forbade exactly that. Conclusion: monetary independence is both a sovereign necessity and a developmental one, and the two arguments converge on the same act. Every step is sound; the conclusion follows; and it was catastrophic — because the analysis was complete in every respect but one, the respect that mattered most. The franc zone was not only a leash; it was a leash fused to a feeding tube, the control and the nourishment carried in the same strand by deliberate design, and Keïta's analysis, correct about the control, was silent about the nourishment — it identified the convertibility guarantee as the

mechanism of the leash without registering that the same guarantee was the mechanism by which a landlocked import-dependent economy bought the world's goods at all. The volume states the lesson the case exists to teach: the deepest traps are the ones in which the harmful and the necessary are the same object, so that the analysis which correctly identifies the harm prescribes, in removing it, the removal of the necessity — and the only defence against such a trap is the discipline of asking, before cutting any cord, not merely what it binds but what it carries. Keïta asked the first question and not the second, and the framework marks the omission not as stupidity — he was among the ablest of his generation — but as the specific blindness a correct anti-imperial analysis induces: the leash is so visible as a leash that the feeding tube inside it disappears.

PART V

THE CORD HE CUT

How the franc zone worked — the operations account, the convertibility guarantee, the printed note — as a metabolic umbilicus disguised as a monetary technicality; how Keïta left it in 1962 to issue the Malian franc and gain the printing press his construction needed; and how the act that felt like the completion of independence was the severing of the one tie that fed the patient — 1962

I. What the Franc Zone Actually Was

The volume must explain the mechanism in plain terms, because the whole case turns on it and because its genius was precisely that it did not look like power. When the French colonies became independent, almost all of them kept a shared currency, the CFA franc, inside a system the metropole had built and would operate for the next sixty years and counting. The mechanism had three parts. First, a *fixed parity*: the CFA franc was pegged to the French franc at a rate that did not move, so that a Malian holding CFA francs held, in effect, French money. Second, a *convertibility guarantee*: the French Treasury guaranteed that CFA francs could always be exchanged for French francs without limit — which made the African currency as good as European money for buying European goods, the single most valuable property a poor country's money can have. Third, and the price of the first two, an *operations account*: each African central bank kept its foreign-exchange reserves on deposit with the French Treasury, in an account France oversaw, and accepted monetary discipline — limits on how much it could lend its own government, French directors on its board, and the printing of the notes themselves done in France. The volume states the structure in the framework's terms: this was a metabolic umbilicus of the purest kind. It fed the client real nourishment — a stable, convertible currency, low inflation, the ability to import — and in exchange it held the client's reserves, set the client's monetary limits, and kept, in Paris, the ultimate control of the client's money supply. Every other Francophone state kept the cord and got the nourishment and the leash together. The cord was invisible because it was financial; it felt like a technical arrangement among central bankers rather than what it was, which was the deepest instrument of control a departing empire had ever devised — sovereignty granted in the flag and retained in the franc.

II. The Severing

Keïta read the cord as a leash, and he was not wrong; he simply did not see that it was also a feeding tube. In 1962 Mali left the franc zone and created its own national currency, the Malian franc, issued by its own central bank, the Banque de la République du Mali. The volume reads the act as the completion of the logic that had driven him since the cell: real independence could not coexist with a money printed in and guaranteed by the former colonial power; a sovereign state needed sovereign money; and — the fiscal motive Part IV established — a state spending beyond its means on socialist construction needed a central bank that would lend it what the plan required, which the franc zone's discipline forbade. So Mali took the

printing press. The new Malian franc was nominally pegged to the French franc, and France even agreed, in a 1963 accord, to a limited continued cooperation — but the substance was rupture: Mali now controlled its own money supply, kept its own reserves, set its own monetary policy, and could finance its deficits by issue. The volume marks the moment as the volume's hinge and the framework's cleanest specimen of a self-inflicted wound mistaken for a liberation. Keïta had identified, correctly, an instrument of neo-colonial control and cut it — an act of genuine sovereignty, applauded by the radicals and by the pan-African left as the real thing the flag had only promised. But the instrument was double, as the franc zone's nourishing-and-leashing structure was double, and in cutting the leash he severed the feeding tube: the convertibility guarantee was gone. The Malian franc was not convertible; no one outside Mali wanted it; and a landlocked country that imports most of what it consumes had just given itself a currency that the outside world would not accept.

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III. The Trap, Sprung

The consequences arrived on the schedule the framework predicts, and the volume traces them as the metabolic trap closing in monetary form. A currency the world will not accept cannot buy imports; a country that cannot buy imports must either earn hard currency by exports — which Mali, with its mismanaged trade monopoly and its landlocked groundnut economy, could not do at scale — or print money it cannot back, which is inflation. Mali did the second, because the whole point of leaving had been to gain the press, and the press was now used to finance the deficits the construction generated. The Malian franc inflated; goods grew scarce as importers could not source hard currency to buy abroad; the official exchange rate detached from reality and a black market opened beneath it; smuggling flourished across the long borders, Malian goods and currency leaking to the convertible-franc neighbours and scarce goods leaking back at black-market prices. The state's monopoly, SOMIEX, sat athwart this failing system as both its symbol and its enforcer, and the population — the peasants who could not get the goods their cotton and groundnuts should have bought, the traders strangled by the monopoly and the inconvertibility, the urban consumers facing empty shelves and rising prices — experienced the sovereignty of 1962 as the scarcity of 1965. The volume states the structural finding the case was selected to demonstrate: the metabolic trap need not run through sugar or rice or oil; it can run through *money itself*, and in the franc zone it was engineered to. Keïta had been given, by the departing empire, an umbilical cord that nourished and controlled in a single strand; he had cut it to end the control; and he discovered, too late and irreversibly, that he had also ended the nourishment — that the cord he resented was the cord he lived by, and that the empire's deepest cruelty was to have made dependence and sustenance the very same tie, so that every act of independence was also an act of self-harm.

The trap's human texture deserves the record, because the abstraction of inconvertibility was lived as a concrete daily defeat along the country's long and unguardable borders. Mali's frontiers run for thousands of kilometres through Sahel and desert, dividing peoples — Bambara, Fulani, Soninké, Malinké — who had traded and migrated across those lines since before the lines existed, and on the far side of them lay Senegal, the Ivory Coast, Upper Volta, all still inside the franc zone with convertible CFA francs in their pockets. When the Malian franc became inconvertible and inflated, the structural consequence was automatic and ineradicable: a Malian cotton or groundnut farmer near the border who sold his crop to the state monopoly received Malian francs that bought scarce goods at official prices that did not exist in practice, while the same crop carried a few kilometres across the line fetched convertible CFA francs that bought real goods at

real prices — so the crop went across the line, by the lorry-load and the donkey-load, and the goods came back as contraband at black-market rates. The state could not stop it; no state could have policed that border against the price differential its own currency had created. The volume reads the smuggling as the metabolic trap's circulatory symptom: the country was haemorrhaging its exportable wealth and its hard-currency earnings across borders the inconvertible franc had turned into arbitrage opportunities, the peasantry rationally defecting from the national economy because the national economy paid in money the world refused, and the state's response — border controls, anti-hoarding campaigns, the militia's later exactions against traders — treating the symptom as treason rather than as the predictable physics of an inconvertible currency in a porous landlocked economy. Every other instrument of the construction could be blamed on enemies; the smuggling was the clearest proof that the enemy was the currency decision itself, and it was the proof the regime could least afford to read. The next part is what the metropole did while this unfolded — which was, the volume will argue, almost nothing, and that almost-nothing was the reaction.

PART VI

THE REACTION THAT LOOKED LIKE PATIENCE

How the metropole, its position threatened, reacted not with troops or plots but with the most quietly devastating weapon a former empire holds — the terms of return; how France let the Malian franc fail of its own logic, then set the price of readmission to the cord; and the 1967 accord that bought monetary survival with a fifty-per-cent devaluation and a creditor's supervision, splitting the party and arming the radicals — 1962–1967

I. The Weapon of Doing Little

The volume must now read the metropole's reaction, and the reading is subtle because the reaction was subtle — so subtle that it can be mistaken for absence. France did not invade Mali, did not embargo it, did not arm an exile force or plot the founder's assassination; the Cuban and Korean hegemons' instruments were not deployed, and a careless reading concludes that France simply let Mali go. The volume argues the opposite: the metropole reacted with precision, through the one instrument it never had to pick up because it already held it — the terms of convertibility — and its reaction took the form of *patience*, which in this structural position was a weapon rather than its absence. The logic ran thus. France knew what Keïta apparently did not: that a non-convertible currency in a landlocked import-dependent economy would fail, predictably and without anyone needing to push it; that the failure would generate exactly the scarcity, inflation, and discontent Part V described; and that the failing state would, in time, have to come back to the cord, because there was no other source of a convertible currency for a country in Mali's position. The metropole therefore did not need to act against Mali; it needed only to wait, holding the franc zone open as the destination Mali would eventually be forced to seek, and to set, when that moment came, the price of readmission. The volume states the structural principle the case exposes: the deepest form of post-imperial power is not the capacity to attack the client but the capacity to *be the thing the client must return to* — to have arranged the world so that the client's independence fails on its own and the metropole's embrace is the only refuge from the failure.

The volume must enter one complication at full strength, because the honest reading requires it: France did not merely wait passively, and the period between the rupture and the return contains a French gesture that cuts against the pure-patience account. In 1963 France and Mali signed a cooperation accord under which Paris extended a measure of support to the Malian franc and kept a channel open — not the full convertibility guarantee, but a partial arrangement that softened the immediate fall and signalled that the door was not bolted. The volume reads the gesture two ways and declines to collapse them. On the charitable reading, it was genuine accommodation: France, not wishing to drive a poor former colony to ruin, offered what help it could short of the full guarantee Mali had renounced. On the structural reading, it was the patience strategy's instrument rather than its refutation — a partial support that kept Mali in relationship with

the franc and France, neither cutting it loose to seal itself like Guinea nor restoring it to full convertibility, holding it in a managed dependence in which the currency could fail slowly enough to teach its lesson without failing so fast as to force a total rupture. The volume cannot adjudicate the intent, and following its method does not pretend to; it notes only that the effect was the patience strategy's effect — Mali neither escaped nor was sustained, but declined within a continuing French relationship toward the 1967 return — and that whether by design or by the structural logic of the position, France occupied throughout the role the framework names as the deepest form of post-imperial power: the indispensable alternative, present enough to be the destination and absent enough to make the journey back painful. The 1963 accord does not soften the verdict; it specifies its mechanism, showing that the patience was active, managed, and conducted through the same monetary instruments by which the return would finally be priced. Patience is a weapon only available to the party that controls the alternative; France controlled it; and France waited.

II. The Price of Return

By 1967 the wait had done its work, and the volume sets out the terms of return as the reaction's actual content. Mali's monetary situation was untenable: the inflation, the scarcity, the black market, the collapse of the state's external purchasing power had become a daily crisis, and Keïta — the pragmatist beneath the revolutionary, the negotiator who had voted *Oui* in 1958 — opened talks with Paris to bring the Malian franc back into a relationship with the French franc and recover convertibility. The price France set, in the monetary accord of 1967, the volume reports as the creditor's terms they were: the Malian franc was devalued by fifty per cent — its holders' savings and the state's external claims halved at a stroke, the cost of the 1962 adventure crystallised on the population's books; Mali accepted a return toward the franc-zone discipline it had left, with French oversight of its monetary management restored, the operations-account logic re-imposed, the printing press surrendered back; and the supervision came with the conditionality a creditor imposes on a supplicant — restraint on the very deficit spending the socialist construction required. The volume marks the exactness of the framework's prediction: the metropole, its position threatened by a client who had cut the cord, reacted by letting the cord-cutting fail and then pricing the reconnection at a fifty-per-cent devaluation plus the restoration of its supervision — recovering, through the client's own forced return, more control than it had exercised before the rupture, and at the client's expense rather than its own. No troops, no plots, no embargo: the reaction was a column in an accord, and it was more devastating than a brigade.

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III. The Devaluation That Split the Party

The 1967 accord detonated inside the regime, and the volume traces the detonation because it converted an economic defeat into the political crisis that ended the founder. The devaluation and the return toward France were, to the regime's radical wing — the militants of the party youth, the ideologues for whom the 1962 currency had been the proudest act of the revolution — a *betrayal*: the cord triumphantly cut in 1962 was being humiliatingly reattached in 1967, the independence undone, the revolution's signature achievement reversed on the metropole's terms, and the population made to pay the fifty per cent. The volume reads the moment in the collection's framework: Keïta, the pragmatist, had made the rational move — convertibility recovered was survival, and survival required the accord — but the doctrine he had built his legitimacy on

could not absorb a rational retreat, because a revealed doctrine reads every concession to the enemy as apostasy rather than prudence; and so the very accord that saved the currency split the party that the currency had unified. The right of the US-RDA, which had negotiated the French deal, and the left, which damned it, now faced each other across the rupture; and Keïta, his pragmatist's solution rejected by his own revolution, made the choice that Part VII anatomises — he did not retreat from the radicals but vaulted ahead of them, abandoning the negotiated prudence for a leftward radicalisation designed to recapture the revolution's purity and his own command of it. The reaction that looked like patience had achieved, through a single column of figures, what no French army could have: it had set the Malian revolution at war with itself, and handed its founder the dilemma — submit to the betrayal his radicals saw, or out-radicalise them into catastrophe — from which the coup would follow.

PART VII

THE EMERGENCY IN SLOW MOTION

How Keïta, his pragmatism rejected, answered the crisis his own choices had made by manufacturing a permanent emergency from above — the active revolution of 1967, the suspended constitution, the popular militia, the purges; how the self-inflicted wound was re-narrated into the work of enemies; and how the militia he armed against the party turned the army into the instrument of his fall — 1967–1968

I. The Active Revolution

The volume reaches the part where the framework's permanent-emergency mechanism appears, and the Malian case offers its subtlest variant, because here the emergency was neither invented from whole cloth like the Albanian's nor delivered by a real adversary like the Cuban's but *manufactured from the consequences of the leader's own decisions, re-narrated as enemy action*. By 1967 Keïta governed a failing economy, a humiliated currency, a split party, and a discontented population — a crisis substantially of his own construction's making, from the over-ambitious plan to the catastrophic cord-cutting to the devaluation that answered it. A tested doctrine would have read this record as refutation and revised; a revealed doctrine reads it as sabotage and purges, and Keïta — under the pressure of his radicals' charge of betrayal, and unwilling to accept that the failure was structural rather than treasonous — chose the revealed path. In August 1967 he launched the *revolution active*, the active revolution: he suspended the constitution, dissolved the political bureau of his own party, and established a National Committee for the Defence of the Revolution to rule by campaign; in January 1968 he dissolved the National Assembly. The volume reads the active revolution as the Maoist-inflected thing it was — Keïta had visited China, admired the Cultural Revolution then convulsing it, and borrowed its instruments: mobilisation against the party's own cadres, the denunciation of bureaucratic and bourgeois enemies within, the purge framed as purification, the permanent campaign substituted for the failed plan. The emergency's content was the doctrine's standard alibi: the revolution's troubles were not the plan's failure or the currency's collapse but the work of enemies — corrupt officials, hoarders, counter-revolutionaries, the agents of neo-colonialism within — and the cure was vigilance, purge, and the mobilised faithful against the compromised apparatus.

The volume traces the active revolution's specific debts and its specific recruits, because both illuminate the mechanism. Keïta had visited China and admired the Cultural Revolution then at its height, and the borrowings are unmistakable: the leader appealing over the heads of his own party to a mobilised youth, the denunciation of entrenched cadres as a new bureaucratic bourgeoisie, the campaign substituted for the institution, the permanent purification in place of the failed plan — Maoism's instruments imported by a man who had run out of the developmental doctrine's answers and reached for its emergency machinery. But the volume marks the local sociology the borrowing rode upon, because it explains why the militia found recruits. The 1962 currency and the socialist construction had produced a cohort of educated, mobilised, ideologically formed young Malians — the party youth, the products of the schools the revolution had built

and the cells it had run — for whom the revolution was identity and prospect both, and for whom the 1967 retreat to France was not an abstraction but the betrayal of the future they had been promised and trained for. These were the militia's recruits: the formed young, surplus to an economy that could not employ them, supplied by the doctrine with a vocabulary that explained their frustration as the enemy's sabotage and a licence to act on it. The volume reads the active revolution, in the collection's terms, as the elite-overproduction dynamic the framework's second inquiry named, telescoped into a single regime: a state that had manufactured more aspirant cadres than its failing economy could place, and that channelled the resulting pressure not into reform — the foreclosed single party offered no such channel — but into a mobilised assault on its own apparatus, the surplus formed youth turned against the bureaucracy as the doctrine's designated enemy. The militia was elite overproduction armed and pointed inward; and the army's alarm at it was the older, harder elite watching the younger, surplus one be elevated above it with weapons in its hands.

II. The Militia

The active revolution's instrument was the *milice populaire*, the popular militia of the party youth, and the volume marks it as the moment the emergency acquired the floor of force that the framework's durable orders require — except that here the floor was improvised, factional, and aimed in the wrong direction. Keïta, having dissolved his own party's leadership and declared war on his own bureaucracy, needed an instrument of compulsion loyal to him personally rather than to the apparatus he was purging; the militia — young, radical, armed, and ideologically fervent — was that instrument, turned loose to enforce the active revolution against officials, traders, and ordinary citizens alike. Its conduct was the predictable conduct of an armed, unaccountable, ideologically licensed youth force: the *exactions* the record names — the harassment, the extortion, the arbitrary arrests and beatings, the petty tyranny of militants empowered to police their neighbours' revolutionary purity. The volume reads the militia in the collection's terms as the instrument trap operating at the regime's end: a leader who has lost the apparatus builds a parallel force of loyalty to compel what the apparatus will no longer deliver, and the parallel force, selected for fervour rather than competence and accountable to no institution, becomes a source of terror that delegitimises the regime faster than the crisis it was meant to master. The militia made the active revolution hated; and, the volume notes for the part's climax, it made one institution in particular its enemy — the army, the one armed body in Mali the militia's existence insulted and threatened, a professional force watching an armed party-youth gang be elevated above it as the regime's true sword.

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III. The Coup the Militia Invited

The end arrived on the framework's logic, and the volume traces it precisely. The army — professional, sidelined, alarmed by the militia that was being built into a rival armed force, and governing, with the rest of the country, the wreck of the economy and the terror of the active revolution — did what armies in that position do: on the nineteenth of November 1968 a group of junior officers under Lieutenant Moussa Traoré overthrew Modibo Keïta in a bloodless coup, arrested him, and dissolved the apparatus of the revolution. The volume reads the coup as the convergence of every strand the volume has traced: the economic failure of the construction, the currency catastrophe of 1962, the humiliation of 1967, the split of the party, the terror of the

militia, and the alienation of the army the militia had threatened — the self-inflicted emergency completing itself by producing the institution that ended it. And the volume marks the bitter confirmation the aftermath supplied. The new military regime, the record shows, promptly reinstated the very right-wing figures who had negotiated the 1967 French financial deal and whom the active revolution had purged — the men of the cord's reattachment restored to office by the men who overthrew the cord-cutter; Mali rejoined the franc zone fully in 1968 and would readopt the CFA franc outright in 1984, the umbilical cord reconnected, the experiment of monetary sovereignty closed; and Moussa Traoré would rule, as a military dictator, for twenty-three years, the foreclosure reloaded in the army's hands. Keïta himself was imprisoned, and died in detention in Bamako in 1977 — by persistent account, of poison brought with his food — a schoolteacher descended from emperors, dead in a commando camp's cell, his funeral the occasion for crowds that the dictatorship's security forces violently dispersed. The man who cut the cord to be free had been undone by the cutting; the metropole's patient weapon had worked; and the army that finished him reattached, on the metropole's terms, the cord he had died trying to sever.

PART VIII

THE NEIGHBOURS AND THE PATTERN

How Mali's fate reads against its siblings — Guinea, which cut every cord at once and was punished by withdrawal; Senghor's Senegal, which kept every cord and bought stability with dependence; Ghana's Nkrumah, the Anglophone parallel overthrown the same way two years earlier; and the franc zone that outlived them all, the cord still feeding fourteen states in 2026 — 1958–2026

I. Guinea: The Cord Cut All at Once

The comparison set is the part's instrument, because Mali's choices acquire their meaning only against the roads its neighbours took, and the first sibling is the one that took the opposite turn at the same fork. Guinea's Sékou Touré voted *Non* in 1958 and cut every cord at once — the political tie, the administrative tie, and the monetary tie together — taking immediate and total independence; and France's reaction was the one it did not deploy against Mali, the punitive withdrawal the Cuban and Korean volumes' hegemons would recognise: administrators recalled, equipment stripped, investment halted, the new state cut off at the root as a deterrent lesson to every other territory then choosing. Guinea left the franc zone immediately, issued its own currency in 1960, and suffered the same inconvertibility trap Mali would enter in 1962 — but Touré, unlike Keïta, never sought readmission; he turned to the Soviet bloc, sealed the country, and built across twenty-six years the harshest of the Francophone one-party states, the Camp Boiro prison and the permanent purge against unending "fifth column" plots — the manufactured-emergency mechanism in its fullest African form, an invented siege to match the real withdrawal. The volume reads the pair as a controlled experiment: Guinea and Mali cut the monetary cord and hit the same inconvertibility wall, but Guinea cut it as part of a total rupture and answered the consequent isolation with a sealed, Soviet-aligned terror-state that endured, while Mali cut it alone, inside a continuing French relationship, and was forced back to the cord on terms that destroyed it. The variable was not whether the cord was cut but what the cutter did about the wall behind it — seal and endure, or return and be priced — and the outcomes diverged accordingly.

II. Senegal: The Cord Kept

The second sibling kept every cord, and the volume reads Senghor's Senegal as Mali's true control case, because the two had been one country for two months and shared everything but the choice. Léopold Senghor — the cultural theorist of the Martinican volume's négritude circle, Keïta's partner in the dead Federation and his opposite in method — kept Senegal inside the franc zone, kept the French military and economic ties, kept the convertible currency and the operations account and the leash that came with them, and governed a relatively plural, relatively stable state that never attempted Mali's socialist construction or cut Mali's cord. The volume holds the comparison at full strength because it cuts against any simple verdict. Senegal bought, with its retained cords, exactly the nourishment Mali lost: a convertible currency, low inflation, continued investment, stability — and Senghor, alone among the collection's leaders, eventually

relinquished power voluntarily, retiring in 1980 to a plural succession, the gradualist's road producing the gentler end. But Senegal bought that stability at the price the franc zone charges to this day — monetary policy made in Paris, an economy still oriented to the former metropole, a sovereignty real in the flag and partial in the franc — the dependence Keïta had died trying to escape, accepted and endured. The volume declines to award the comparison to either man, because the framework does not: Keïta chose sovereignty and got catastrophe; Senghor chose dependence and got stability; and the choice between them is the choice the franc zone was designed to impose — independence that fails or subordination that works — which is itself the deepest measure of the cord's power, that it could make dependence the rational choice for a serious patriot.

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III. Nkrumah and the Pattern

The Anglophone parallel completes the pattern and universalises it beyond the franc zone, and the volume marks it because it shows the dynamic was not merely French. Kwame Nkrumah's Ghana — independent in 1957, the continent's pan-African beacon, building its own ambitious state-socialist construction with the same single party, the same prestige projects, the same planning deficit, the same fiscal overreach — was overthrown by its own army in February 1966, two years before Keïta and for substantially the same convergence of reasons: economic failure, authoritarian drift, an alienated army, and a Western interest content to see a radical pan-Africanist fall. The volume reads the parallel as confirmation that the Malian pattern was structural rather than Francophone-specific: across the continent, the first generation of radical nation-builders — formed in the metropole's apparatus or its orbit, committed to rapid socialist construction on colonial foundations the construction could not yet bear, governing single parties that foreclosed the plurality that might have corrected them — ran into the craft-of-rule deficit and the fiscal wall, radicalised or drifted as the failure mounted, and were swept away by the one institution the colony had left functional, the army, into decades of military rule. Mali's distinction within the pattern was the monetary cord — the specific French instrument that made its trap sharper and its metropole's reaction subtler than Ghana's — but the shape was continental, and the volume names it as such.

The franc zone itself is the part's final and most telling fact, because it is the one element of the whole story still operating, unchanged in essence, as this volume is written. The CFA franc survived Keïta, survived Mali's return and readoption, survived the independence generation entire; it was devalued by half again in 1994, by the metropole's decision, with the same socialising of the cost onto African populations; and in 2026 it remains the currency of some fourteen African states, its operations-account logic softened in name and reformed at the edges but its essential structure — the convertibility guarantee, the French backstop, the monetary policy oriented to Paris and now to the euro — intact, the subject of a living African debate in which Keïta's ghost is explicitly invoked. The cord he cut, and that was reattached over his ruin, still feeds and still leashes a sixth of the continent's states six decades on. The volume marks the fact as the case's largest: the metabolic trap this volume anatomised in one country across eight years is not a historical episode but a standing structure, the most durable instrument of post-imperial control the collection has examined, outliving every leader who submitted to it and every leader who defied it alike.

PART IX

THE FORMATION AND THE FAITH

Whether the belief here was formation or instrument; how Keïta's Marxism functioned as a developmental tool rather than a revealed religion, and what that bought and cost; the imperial memory as the deeper formation beneath the doctrine; and the regime that, alone in the collection so far, counted few corpses because its doctrine was held too lightly to kill for — 1960–1968

I. A Doctrine Held as a Tool

The volume turns to the question the collection asks of every case — was the belief formation or trick, revelation or instrument — and the Malian answer is distinctive enough to sharpen the framework. Keïta's Marxism, the record establishes, was real but instrumental: a developmental doctrine, a theory of how a poor post-colonial state might build itself through planning and a single disciplined party, held by a schoolteacher who had come to it through the union and the cell as the most rigorous available technology of national construction — not a revealed religion of the kind the Cambodian and Korean volumes anatomised, with its scripture, its infallibility, and its corpses. The evidence is in the conduct the framework reads. Keïta tilted toward Washington as readily as Moscow, courting American aid and calling Kennedy a friend — unthinkable for a man owned by the doctrine; he made, in 1967, the rational pragmatic retreat to France that a true believer could not have made, and was destroyed by his own radicals precisely because he was less doctrinaire than they; and even his turn to the active revolution in 1967–68 reads less as the eruption of a revealed faith than as a desperate tactical radicalisation, a pragmatist out of pragmatic options reaching for the doctrine's emergency machinery to recapture a revolution slipping from his hands. The volume states the finding: in Mali the doctrine was an instrument, held by an able and serious man as the tool of a national project, and used, bent, and finally weaponised as the project failed — closer to the Cuban subject's instrumental adoption than to the Cambodian's possession, but more sincere than the Cuban's, because Keïta's nationalism and his socialism were genuinely fused rather than the one a ticket for the other.

II. The Memory Beneath the Marx

The deeper formation, the volume argues, lay beneath the doctrine and outlasted it: the imperial memory of Part I, the knowledge carried in the Keïta name and the griot's word that this land had once been a centre and not a periphery. This was the formation installed before the cell ever reached him — the *mansa*'s sovereignty as the remembered alternative to the colony — and the volume reads it as the engine the Marxism merely armed: Keïta's socialism was the modern vocabulary in which an older and deeper ambition spoke, the ambition to restore the centre, to make Mali a sovereign continental actor again, to undo the colony's reduction of an empire to a hinterland. The pan-Africanism, the Federation, the cord-cutting, the non-alignment, the prestige on the world stage that the witnesses describe — these were the imperial memory's projects, and the Marxism was their instrument rather than their source. The volume marks the distinction

because it explains the case's particular tragedy: Keïta failed not because his doctrine was a false revelation that counted corpses but because his true formation — the imperial ambition to restore a centre — was being enacted on a substrate the French had spent sixty years engineering into a periphery, with an instrument, the plan, that the periphery lacked the craft to run, and against a cord, the franc, designed precisely to keep the centre in Paris. The empire he remembered and the colony he governed were the same land sixty years and one monetary system apart, and the distance between them was the distance no doctrine could close.

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III. The Doctrine Held Too Lightly to Kill For

The ledger's most striking entry, the volume notes before drawing it up in full, is an absence: Mali under Keïta counted few corpses. There was repression — the single party, the jailing of opponents, the militia's exactions, the foreclosure of plurality — but there was no massacre, no famine of policy, no killing fields, no camps; the regime was authoritarian and it failed, but it did not slaughter, and the volume reads the absence in the framework's terms as the confirmation of the part's thesis. A doctrine counts corpses when it is held as a revelation — when every failure is read as sabotage requiring liquidation, when the premise can never be wrong and so the people must be — and Keïta's doctrine was held too lightly, too instrumentally, too fused with a constructive national ambition, to demand that price. He bent it in 1967 rather than killing for it; he reached for its emergency machinery in 1968 but reached for a youth militia's exactions, not a security service's graves; and when the army came he fell without ordering the bloodbath a true believer cornered might have. The volume states the finding the collection has been building toward across its instrumental cases: the lethality of a revolutionary regime is a function not of its doctrine's content but of how the doctrine is held — revealed doctrines kill in proportion to their faith, and a doctrine held as a tool, even a failing tool, by a man whose deeper formation was constructive rather than apocalyptic, fails without the slaughter. The volume sets one comparison beside this finding to fix it, because the collection's other instrumental cases confirm the pattern from their own ledgers. Castro's Cuba, the volume found, was an instrumental adoption that nonetheless counted its dead in the thousands — the firing squads, the camps, the prisons — because the Cuban subject, however instrumental his doctrine, held control itself as a value beyond welfare and beyond mercy, and would shed blood to keep it. Keïta differs in exactly that dimension, and the difference is the part's whole point: when his revolution failed and the army came, he did not order the massacre that might have saved him for a season; he fell, and was imprisoned, and died in a cell — but the streets did not run, the camps were not built, the harvest was not seized at gunpoint from a starving peasantry to feed a slogan. The volume reads the restraint not as a virtue of character — the method does not adjudicate souls — but as a property of the position: Keïta's deeper formation, the imperial memory of Part I, was an ambition to *build* a centre, not to purify a people; his Marxism was a tool of that building, not a revelation demanding sacrifice; and a man so formed, cornered, reaches for the militia's exactions and the active revolution's purges but not for the abattoir, because the abattoir serves no building and his formation knew no purification to demand it. The finding the collection has assembled across its cases stands confirmed in the African material: lethality is a property not of the doctrine's content but of how it is held and of what lies beneath it — revealed faith over an apocalyptic formation counts corpses; instrumental doctrine over a constructive formation fails, when it fails, comparatively clean. It is the thinnest consolation the collection offers, and the volume offers it as exactly that and no more: the Malians lost their economy, their plurality, and their founder, and were spared only the worst thing, which the framework's other subjects were not spared and did not spare. It is the

thinnest of consolations and the volume offers it as no more than that: Mali's revolution was destroyed and its founder died in a cell, but its people were spared the corpse-mountains, and the sparing traces to the lightness of the founder's faith.

PART X

THE LEDGER AND THE VERDICT

The full accounting — the sovereignty asserted, the name reclaimed, the dignity, the cadres trained, the corpses not counted, against the economy wrecked, the currency ruined, the plurality foreclosed, the founder dead in a cell, and the cord reattached on the metropole's terms; the verdict on the hypotheses, the strongest counter-readings at full strength, and the conditions that would defeat them — 1960–2026

I. The Ledger

Both columns, in ink. The gains: a genuine assertion of sovereignty, the colony's commercial and administrative subordination to France really attacked, the trade structure really wrested from the foreign houses, the administration really Africanised; the imperial name reclaimed and a national dignity asserted that outlived the regime, Keïta rehabilitated in 1992 and memorialised in Bamako, his bearing and his non-alignment and his pan-African voice remembered with a pride the economic failure did not erase; real if fragile gains in schooling and the training of the cadres the colony had denied; a serious, doctrinally coherent attempt to build a developmental state on the poorest of foundations, which failed but was not corrupt and was not a fraud; and the corpses not counted, the doctrine held too lightly to kill for, a people spared the slaughter the collection's revealed cases inflicted. The costs: an economy wrecked by an over-ambitious plan its craft deficit could not run; a currency ruined by a cord-cutting that mistook the feeding tube for the leash, and a population made to pay the fifty-per-cent devaluation of its forced return; the plurality of even the limited post-colonial kind foreclosed into a single party and then a suspended constitution and a youth militia's terror; the founder's pragmatist's retreat punished by his own radicals into a self-destroying radicalisation; and the end — the coup, the twenty-three-year military dictatorship that followed, the founder dead in a cell by probable poison, the cord reattached on the metropole's terms by the men who overthrew him. The volume sets the columns side by side and notes that the costs were structural and the gains were moral: Keïta lost the economy and the state and his life, and kept only the dignity and the name — which his people, the rehabilitation showed, counted as more than nothing.

II. The Verdict

The hypotheses, returned. *The sincere socialist who built a real state*: confirmed — the construction was serious, coherent, and genuinely his, not a kleptocrat's flag, and its failure was structural rather than venal. *The permanent emergency self-inflicted in slow motion*: confirmed and refined — Keïta did not invent a siege like the Albanian or receive one like the Cuban; he made his crisis by his own choices and then, when his pragmatic retreat was rejected, re-narrated the self-inflicted failure into enemy sabotage and built the active revolution's emergency machinery against it, the revealed-doctrine alibi reached for late and as a tactic rather than lived as a faith. *The metabolic trap running through money*: confirmed as the case's signal contribution

to the collection — the franc zone was a metabolic umbilicus that nourished and leashed in a single strand, and cutting it sprang the trap as surely as the loss of any patron's subsidy in the volumes before, with the distinction that the trap was monetary and the metropole's hand was deniable. *The metropole reacting through finance*: confirmed as the collection's subtlest reaction — France deployed no troops and needed none, reacting through the terms of convertibility, the weapon of patience, and the price of return, recovering more control through the client's forced readmission than it had held before the rupture, at the client's expense and on the deniable ground of mere central banking.

Four readings stand against the verdict at full strength. The first is the anti-imperial reading: that Keïta was right — the franc zone was and is a neo-colonial leash, cutting it was the correct act of a true patriot, and the failure proves not his error but the depth of the trap, that the empire had so arranged things that the right act was punished with ruin. The volume grants it almost entirely; the cord was a leash, the analysis was correct, and the case's deepest finding is precisely that the trap made the right choice catastrophic — but the volume holds that being right about the leash did not excuse misjudging the feeding tube, and that a leader's task includes seeing that an instrument is double before he severs it. The second is the structural-victim reading: that no choice available to Keïta could have succeeded, that the craft deficit and the landlocked poverty and the franc zone together foreclosed every road, and that the man is therefore not to be judged at all. The volume grants the constraints entire and answers with Senghor: the same constraints, the cord kept, produced stability and a peaceful succession — not sovereignty, but not ruin — so the roads were not all equally closed, and the choice between dependence-that-works and independence-that-fails was real, however cruel. The third is the pragmatist's-vindication reading: that Keïta's 1967 retreat was correct and his error was the 1968 radicalisation that followed, that he should have weathered his radicals rather than vaulting ahead of them. The volume finds this the strongest counter-reading and largely concurs, noting only that the doctrine he had built made the prudent course legitimately impossible — a revealed revolution cannot ratify a retreat — which returns the failure to the foreclosure that left no institution able to absorb a correction. The fourth is the deflationary reading: that this was a routine post-colonial economic failure and military coup, of which the era had dozens, and the monetary cord is being over-read into significance. The volume answers with the franc zone's survival to 2026: a structure that still governs fourteen states six decades on, still debated in Keïta's explicit name, is not an over-reading but the case's whole point — the cord was not incidental to Mali's tragedy; it was the mechanism, and it is still operating.

What would defeat the verdict, published as the method requires: evidence that Mali's economy failed for reasons unrelated to the currency rupture and the craft deficit; evidence that France's monetary posture toward Mali was passive accommodation rather than the patient leverage the volume reads; a sibling case that cut the monetary cord, refused readmission, and prospered, showing the trap escapable; or evidence that Keïta held his doctrine as a revelation after all, killing for it where the record shows he did not. None appears in the record as it stands.

The volume closes on the open ledger, in the collection's posture. A schoolteacher descended from emperors, formed in cells the metropole itself had planted, reclaimed an empire's name for a colony's carcass, asserted a real sovereignty, and cut the one cord he thought was only a leash — and the cord was the feeding tube, and the metropole waited, and the return was priced at half the currency and the restoration of the supervision, and the radicals cried betrayal, and the founder out-radicalised them into a militia's terror, and the army the militia threatened ended him, and he died in a cell while the cord he had severed was sewn back on the metropole's terms by his executioners. The framework's laws held: the metabolic trap ran through money as surely as through sugar or rice; the foreclosure that left no institution to correct the

founder reloaded the shape in the army's hands; the doctrine held too lightly to kill for failed without the corpses; and the deepest instrument of the metropole's power was not its capacity to attack but its capacity to be the thing the client must return to.

The cord's power outlived the cord-cutter, and the volume enters one final proof of it, because the franc zone administered to its obedient members, a generation later, the same medicine it had administered to Mali for leaving — which demonstrates that the leash bound the compliant as surely as it had punished the defector. For decades the CFA franc held its parity to the French franc unchanged, the convertibility guarantee's proudest feature and the source of the low inflation the zone's defenders cite; but the fixed parity that protected the African economies from inflation also, over time, overvalued their currencies, making their exports dear and their imports cheap, hollowing their productive capacity exactly as a hard currency hollows any economy that cannot match its discipline. By the early 1990s the operations accounts were in deficit and the overvaluation was strangling the member states' economies — and in January 1994 France resolved the crisis the way a creditor resolves it, by fiat from Paris: the CFA franc was devalued by fifty per cent overnight, halving at a stroke the external purchasing power and the savings of the populations of the obedient member states, who had no vote in the decision and received no warning. The volume sets the 1994 devaluation beside Mali's of 1967 and marks the symmetry as the case's closing structural fact: the member who left the zone was punished with a fifty-per-cent devaluation as the price of return, and the members who stayed were subjected to a fifty-per-cent devaluation by the metropole's unilateral decision a generation later — the same number, the same socialising of the cost onto African populations, the same hand in Paris. There was no choice the cord offered that did not, in the end, route the cost of the metropole's monetary management onto the African poor: leave and be priced back in, or stay and be devalued without consent. The cord nourished, and the cord leashed, and the leash's grip did not distinguish between the disobedient and the loyal — which is the deepest thing the Malian case has to teach, and the reason its question is not closed. And the largest fact sits outside the ledger entirely, still operating: the cord feeds and leashes a sixth of the continent's states as this volume is written, the most durable structure the collection has found, and the debate over whether to cut it — and whether the feeding tube can this time be separated from the leash — is alive in Bamako and Dakar and Abidjan now, conducted, more often than its participants know, in the ghost of a schoolteacher who tried it once and died in a cell. Tested, not revealed: the ledger stays open, as the question of the cord still is.

A NOTE ON SOURCES

This is a work of synthesis, and its debts are to the scholarship it draws on. The landscape parts rest on the standard historiography of the Mali Empire and the trans-Saharan trade, the French conquest of the Soudan, and the colonial economy of French West Africa. The biographical and political spine draws on the scholarship of the Rassemblement Démocratique Africain and the *Groupes d'études communistes*, of Keïta's career and the Union Soudanaise, of the 1958 referendum and the Mali Federation, and of the US-RDA's socialist construction and its *option socialiste*. The monetary core — the operations-account mechanism, the convertibility guarantee, Mali's 1962 exit, the 1967 accord and the fifty-per-cent devaluation, and the 1968 and 1984 returns — rests on the franc-zone literature, including IMF and central-bank technical accounts and the contemporary scholarly debate over the CFA franc. The comparison cases of Guinea, Senegal, and Ghana follow their standard histories. Figures are reported as ranges with provenance where they are disputed, and no argument rests on the contested end of any range; the persistence of the franc zone to 2026 and its continuing debate rest on current reporting. The collection's rule applies: where the volume errs, it should err visibly, in a form the cited scholarship can correct.